

# Assessment Literacy – Planning to Improve with Data

Prince Rupert, SD No. 52  
Principals and Vice Principals  
May 6, 2003

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Goals for the Session

- 1) To understand the concept of Assessment Literacy as a framework for improving student achievement
- 2) To learn and practice some strategies for talking about data
- 3) To consider sources of data other than FSA that can be used to build school plans and guide instruction
- 4) To ensure school plans and goals are SMART

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Context

- Canadians are searching for certainty in our public institutions. (Bricker and Greenspon, 2001)
- “The decline of public trust . . . has ushered in an evidence-based, show-me age. Parents are insisting upon independent, objective and measurable information” ( p. 65)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The "A" Words

- Achievement Standards
- Assessment
- Accountability

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Achievement

- It's about ALL students
- It's about ALL achievements
- It's about Closing the Gap
  - Between different groups of learners and raising the achievement of all students
  - Closing the Gap
    - ❖ In schools
    - ❖ Between schools

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Accountability Cycle

- Every district submits an accountability contract by October 31<sup>st</sup>
- Every school develops a school plan and submits it to the board at a date set by the board
- Annually, up to 20 districts have a district review

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### How are you seeing this in your work? PMI

Think about your experience with the 3 "A's"

- Plus – What benefits are you seeing in your school?
- Minus – What is driving you crazy?
- Implications – What are the implications for you in your role as a Principal or Vice Principal?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Assessment

Did you know??

*Teachers spend one-third of their time on assessment related activities.*

Stiggins & Conklin, 1992

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Assessment Literacy: Fullan

- Ability to gather dependable information about student achievement
- Capacity to examine student data and make sense of it
- Ability to make changes in teaching and schools derived from those data
- Commitment to communicate effectively and engage in assessment discussions

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Assessment Literacy - Stiggins

To understand the differences between:

- Assessment OF learning
- Assessment FOR learning

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Why do educators need to be assessment literate? (15 mins)

- Strategy: 'Say Something'
- Partners look over the text and decide together how far they will read silently before stopping to 'Say Something' (a question, a summary, a key point, a connection, an idea)

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Data \*@\$&\*! Data !! Data??

Sample comments from members

- The greatest concern I have is that the collection of data will become the primary focus and that the improvement of learning based on the information gathered from the data will not occur.
- Teachers have to feel that the result of data collecting is not just to jump through some provincial hoops but something that will directly benefit their students and themselves in doing their job.
- Time! Time! Time! – or lack of it!
- How can we do this quickly and easily using already collected data in meaningful ways?

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Data?? What data?

*Improving [schools] are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, and district/provincial data. The analysis of this evidence has informed the selection of the [school] goals.*

District Review Guide

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Multiple Sources of Data

- Data means more than FSA
- Medical Model

*Activity: What data do we already have that we can use?*

➤ Sharing our good ideas

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted, counts."*

Albert Einstein

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Beyond Data Collection

- Assessment Literacy – capacity to examine student performance data and make sense of them.
- “It’s not the raw scores that count but what you do with them!”

Michael Fullan, Macleans, May 2002

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Demystifying Data Analysis Mike Schmoker

Individually, read the article and highlight key ideas.

- 5 – Individually, review your “key ideas” and select what you think are the five most interesting/important ideas.
- 3 – Share you items at the table, and as a group, select three “key ideas”
- 1 – Now as a group, select one of your key ideas to share with the whole group.

17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Break –

*“There are lies, damn lies and . . .  
Statistics!”*

Mark Twain

18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Data Informs our Decisions - BUT

### WE CREATE THE MEANING!

- Data by itself have no meaning . . . merely pieces of information. Individuals and groups must create meaning by organizing, analyzing and interpreting data.
- There are no truths in data . . . only stories.

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Understanding before planning!!

*What we have in our heads is a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world, the root of all learning, the source of all hopes and fears, motives and expectancies, reasoning and creativity . . . If we make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions with the world in light of our theory. The theory is our shield against bewilderment.*

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Guiding a Conversation about Data – The Three-Phase Cycle (Wellman, Lipton)

- Phase 1 – Activating and Engaging
- Phase 2 – Exploring and Discovering
- Phase 3 – Organizing and Integrating

*See suggested questions for each phase.*

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Consensogram

Purpose to practice the three phases of the Wellman cycle.

1. Answer each question based on your own perceptions
2. Predict the graphs (Phase 1)
3. Create the graphs
4. Analyze the graphs (Phase 2)
5. Frame a theory (Phase 3)

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Consensogram: In your district . .

1. To what degree are teachers using the BC Performance Standards to improve student achievement?
2. To what degree do students know where they stand in relation to the BC Performance Standards?

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6

## Consensogram (cont'd)

3. To what degree are teachers and parents using the language of the Performance Standards when talking together about student work?
4. To what degree do teachers work together in collaborative teams to meet achievement goals?

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Consensogram: Social Responsibility

*To what degree is our school community fully meeting or exceeding expectations for . . .*

1. contributing to the classroom and school community?
2. solving problems in peaceful ways?
3. valuing diversity and defending human rights?
4. exercising the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy?

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Practicing with some FSA Data

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Interpreting Data

Three questions you can ask:

- Is it reliable?
- Is it valid?
- Is it useful?

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Statistics

- Reliability – the trustworthiness of a measure; could the results be replicated?
- Validity – does the test measure what we think it measures?
- Criterion Referenced Assessment
- Norm Referenced Assessment
- Standardized Test

28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tips for looking at FSA Results

1. Recognize limitations of test
2. Need three years or more data before looking for a trend
3. Check participation rates
4. Check the data for sub-populations
5. Compare to other data sources
6. Ask questions and generate alternate hypotheses
7. Plan for improvement based on data

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

• DATA TO SERVE STUDENT LEARNING

• DATA TO IMPROVE, NOT TO PROVE

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Assessment Literacy - Stiggins

To understand the differences between:

- Assessment OF learning
- Assessment FOR learning

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Little Word = Big Difference

- Assessment OF Learning
  - How much have students learned as of a particular point in time?
    - ❖ an event after learning
- Assessment For Learning
  - How can we use assessment to help students learn more?
    - ❖ A process during learning
    - ❖ Formative Assessment

32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Formative Assessment

*"Firm evidence shows that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement."*

Black and Wiliam

33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Learning from the FSA

### Ministry Publications

1. Interpreting and Communicating Foundation Skills Assessment Results
2. Strengths and Areas Requiring Improvement
3. Test Specifications

34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Example - Grade 7 Numeracy

- What are some ways you are using (or could use) the document, Strengths and Areas Requiring Improvement?
- Think, Pair, Share

35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The School Plan – Linking Data and Instruction

- The primary purpose of analyzing data is to improve instruction to achieve greater student success ( Assessment FOR Learning)
- The classroom is where improvement and achievement take place.

36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Components of a School Plan

- What are we going to do?
- Why are we going to do it?
- How are we going to do it?
- How will we know when we've done it?
- How will we communicate with our community?

37

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### SMART School Plans

- Strategic and Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

38

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### District Review Process – 10 Points of Inquiry

- |               |                                            |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Goals      | 7. Communication                           |
| 2. Rationale  | 8. Teamwork – Connection to District Goals |
| 3. Data       | 9. Team work – Parent Involvement          |
| 4. Strategies | 10. Leadership                             |
| 5. Structures |                                            |
| 6. Results    |                                            |

39

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Looking at our Plans

- Find a partner – not the same school, not the same table.
- With your partner, and using the questions in the District Review Guide, review each other's school plans.
- Common Themes?

40

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## TRANSITIONS

### FROM

- Inputs
- Focus on Teaching
- Private Practice
- Accountability
- Opaqueness

### TO

- Outputs
- Focus on Learning
- Collaboration
- Responsibility
- Transparency

41

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Professional Learning Communities – DuFour

1. Shared Mission
2. Collective inquiry
3. Collaborative Teams
4. Action orientation
5. Continuous Improvement
6. Results orientation

42

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Professional Learning Communities

- *Essential for improved student achievement*

Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992

- *Linked to Enhanced Teacher Well being*

Bryk and Driscoll, 1988

43

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## BCPVPA Survey Results

1. Lead discussions with staff about data – 59% said frequently
2. Teachers work together to analyze assessment results and identify areas of low performance – 24 % frequently; 43% never or rarely
3. Teachers use Performance Standards – 30% frequently; 37% never or rarely

44

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Becoming a Professional Learning Community

- As a table team, brainstorm 10 or more reasons why the transition to a professional learning community is difficult.
- Of all the reasons listed, which one is at the "heart of the problem" for your group?
- Point and Go – one person takes his/her group's idea to another table and explains the rationale for the selection of that reason
- Whole group debrief.

45

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Assessment Literacy : Fullan

- Ability to gather dependable information about student achievement
- Capacity to examine student data and make sense of it.
- Ability to make changes in teaching and schools derived from those data
- Commitment to communicate effectively and engage in assessment discussions.

46

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Assessment Literacy - Stiggins

To understand the differences between:

- Assessment OF learning
- Assessment FOR learning

47

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### A School Self Assessment

48

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Reflections

- Important ideas that I want to remember.
- Things I would like to learn more about.
- Action I will take next week.
- Thoughts, Comments, Suggestions

49

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## We need in each school . .

- The willingness to adopt and adapt strategies that work.
- Collaborative infrastructures focused on improving classroom practice – together

*Let's learn from each other.*

50

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Improving schools...

*A [school's] results are determined through webs of human commitments born in human conversations.*

Fernando Flores

51

---

---

---

---

---

---

---